



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Ouachita National Forest
Caddo-Womble Ranger District

1523 Highway 270 East
Mount Ida, AR 71957
870-867-2101
Fax: 870-867-3338

File Code: 1950; 2400; 1560
Date: June 30, 2020

Dear Interested Party:

This project announcement letter serves to initiate scoping, “an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed” (40 CFR 1501.7). I request your input on the following proposed action regarding the Headwaters Little Missouri Project.

Proposed Action

The Forest Service proposes to implement the following management activities*:

- Seed tree regeneration harvest – 421 acres
- Seed tree connected actions – 421 acres:
 - Prescribed burn/chemical/mechanical/manual site preparation for natural regeneration
 - Chop/rip site preparation for artificial regeneration (if needed)
 - Hand plant shortleaf pine seedlings (if needed)
 - Timber stand improvement – release (chemical/manual)
 - Timber stand improvement – precommercial thinning
- Commercial thinning – 896 acres
- Commercial thinning (plantation) – 600 acres
- Commercial thinning (woodland development) – 843 acres
- Timber stand improvement – precommercial thinning - 843
- Wildlife stand improvement (midstory removal) – 71 acres
- Glade restoration – 1,240 acres
- Nest boxes – 67 each
- Aquatic organism passage – 1 each
- Wildlife opening maintenance – 47 acres
- Fuel reduction/ecosystem prescribed burn – 4,575 acres
- Fire line reconstruction – 5 miles
- System road reconstruction – 15 miles
- Temporary road construction – 13 miles
- System road decommission – 2.5 miles
- Watershed improvement – 6.5 mile
- Non-native invasive plant species control – 1 acre
- Trail added to the system – 4.2 miles

*All quantities are approximate; treatment acres would be less due to avoided slopes and/or streamside management areas.

The project area is located 7 miles west of Black Springs, Arkansas in parts of Howard, Montgomery, Pike, and Polk Counties; in T3S R27&28W, T4S R27&28W and T5S R27&28W. The 34,575-acre project area contains 34,078 acres of National Forest System lands. Proposed actions would occur in Management Areas (MAs) 6, 14, 17, 20 and 21.



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Purpose of the Action

Overall guidance for this action is found in the 2005 Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the Ouachita National Forest (Revised Forest Plan). The primary goal of the Revised Forest Plan is to promote diverse, healthy, productive, and sustainable ecosystems. The purpose of this action is to promote the health and vigor of the project area by providing for a diversity of plant and animal communities, creating early seral habitat, reducing fuel accumulation, and producing a sustainable yield of wood products.

Need for the Action

- Past fire suppression activities have removed the natural role of fire from the landscape. This absence of fire has resulted in excessive fuel accumulations, increasing the risk of damage to resources in the event of wildfire.
- Fire is a natural ecosystem process needed to reduce density of understory woody species and maintain the needed light environment that promotes the growth of wildlife foods, the natural regeneration of pine and oak, and the conditions for plants adapted to fire.
- Pine and hardwood stands contain damaged, poorly formed, and diseased trees. The trees are overcrowded or densely stocked, reducing growth and crown development. These conditions result in stress and reduced vigor and health, thus increasing susceptibility to insects and disease.
- There is limited access to those stands in need of silvicultural treatment, resulting in the need for new road construction. Some existing roads are not useable and create the need for road re-construction to access timber.
- There is a lack of high quality forage and a lack of nesting habitat for species requiring early successional habitat.
- There are known populations of exotic and invasive plant species, and possibly hogs, throughout the project area resulting in the need for Non-native Invasive Species control and habitat protection.
- The project includes several recreation sites, trails and areas identified as high scenic integrity. Recreation opportunities and scenic values need to be maintained within these areas.
- There are known locations of glades throughout the project area that are in need of being restored and protected.

Invitation to Participate in Project Planning

Scoping is not limited to a single point in time; we will continue to accept and consider comments until an implementation decision is made. With that said, your comments will be most helpful if they are received early in the process. They will help us identify environmental issues associated with implementation, and alternative ways to meet Forest plan objectives and desired conditions. Your involvement will enable us to better assess concerns of the public.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will become a part of the public record for this proposed action. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, anonymous comments will not provide the Agency with the ability to provide the respondent with subsequent environmental documents.

Objection Process

This project is subject to subparts A and B of *36 CFR Part 218 Project-Level Predecisional Administrative Review Process* (objection process); it is not authorized under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA).

The designated opportunity for public comment in response to this solicitation is ***July 1, 2020*** to ***July 31, 2020***. Providing specific written comments during this time will afford you standing to later file an objection to the project, should you desire (see Upcoming Project Planning Steps).

Pursuant to §218.2, specific written comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the responsible official to consider.

How to Comment

Specific written comments must be submitted to: Shalonda Guy, District Ranger, 1523 Hwy 270 E, Mt. Ida AR 71957 or fax to 870-867-3338. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Send electronic comments, in a common digital format, to comments-southern-ouachita-caddo-womble@fs.fed.us. Please state "Headwaters Little Missouri Project" in the email subject line when providing electronic comments, or on the envelope when replying by mail.

Upcoming Project Planning Steps

As stated above, your comments will help us identify issues and they will be used to formulate alternatives to this proposal. An environmental analysis will be conducted and the results will be documented in an environmental assessment (EA).

Upon completion, the EA will be released for public review and comment. A 30-day notice and comment period pursuant to 36 CFR 218 will be initiated. This comment period will afford you another opportunity to obtain standing to later file an objection to the project, should you desire.

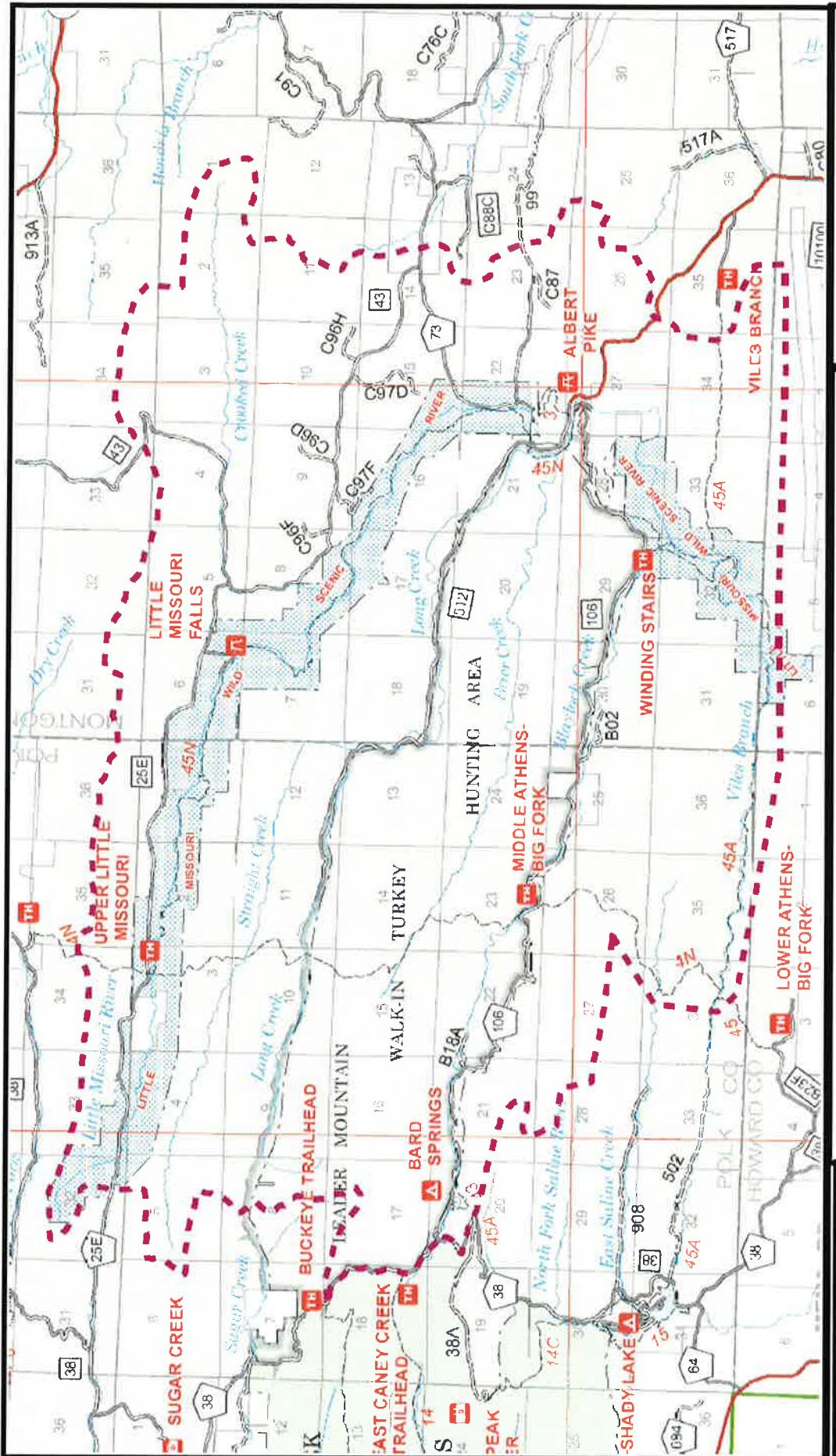
An objection period, if required, will follow the regulation found in §218.7. Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted specific written comments regarding the project and attributed to the objector, unless the issue is based on new information that arose after a designated opportunity to comment (§218.8(c)).

If you have questions about this project or would like more information, please contact Chip Stokes at 870-867-2101 or chip.stokes@usda.gov.

Sincerely,



for SHALONDA L. GUY
District Ranger
Enclosures



Sheet 1 of 1

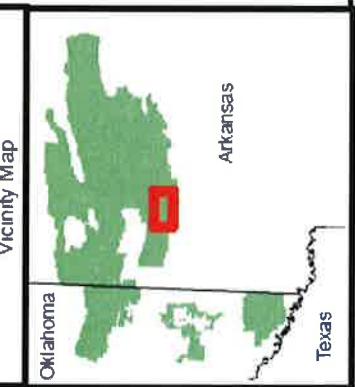
Vicinity Map
Headwaters Little Missouri Project
Caddo-Womble Ranger District
U.S. Forest Service - R8
Ouachita National Forest

For more information, contact the
Ranger District at (870) 867-2101,
1523 Hwy 270 E Mt Ida AR 71957

Legend

Project Boundary

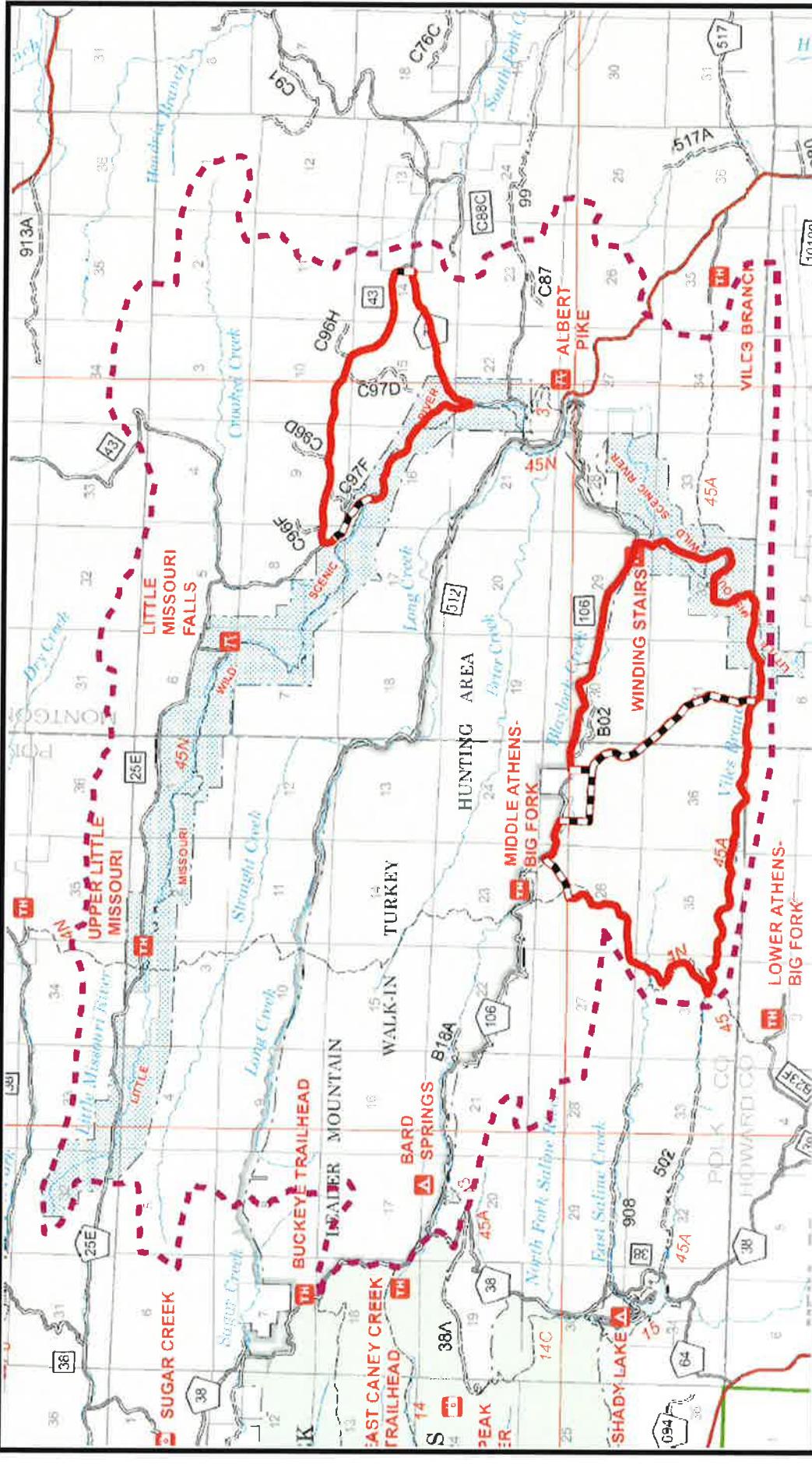
The Forest Service uses the most current and complete data available. GIS data and product accuracy may vary. They may be derived from sources of different accuracy, secured only at certain times, based on modeling or interpretation. Annotiations are represented or revised, etc., using GIS products for purposes other than those for which they were originally intended or inaccurate or misleading results. This information was released on the assumption that the Forest Service reserves the right to correct inaccuracies, modify, or replace GIS products without notice. Operation of a motor vehicle or other motorized vehicle (as by a participant in a race or rally under 36 CFR 211.15) is not permitted on this map. It is the responsibility of the user to assess the current Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM). The MVUM identifies those roads and trails designated for motor vehicle use under 36 CFR 211.5 for the purpose of ensuring the protection of 36 CFR 211.13.



Map Creation Date - 3/3/2020
Map Revision Date -

Headwaters Little Missouri Project

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Sheet 1 of 1

Legend

- Existing_Fireline
- Burn Planned Areas
- Project Boundary

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Vicinity Map

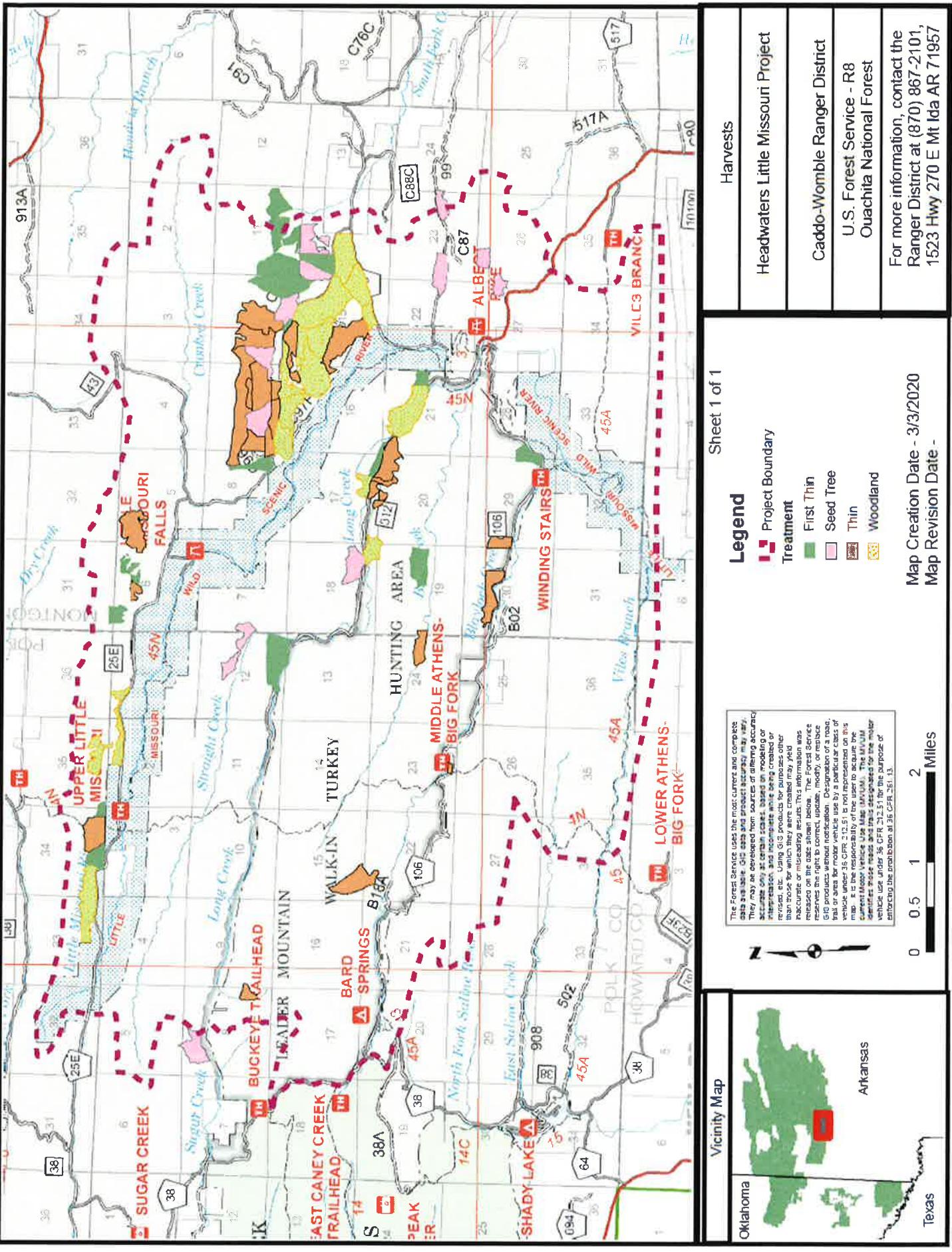


Fuels

- Headwaters Little Missouri Project
- Caddo-Womble Ranger District
- U.S. Forest Service - R8
Ouachita National Forest

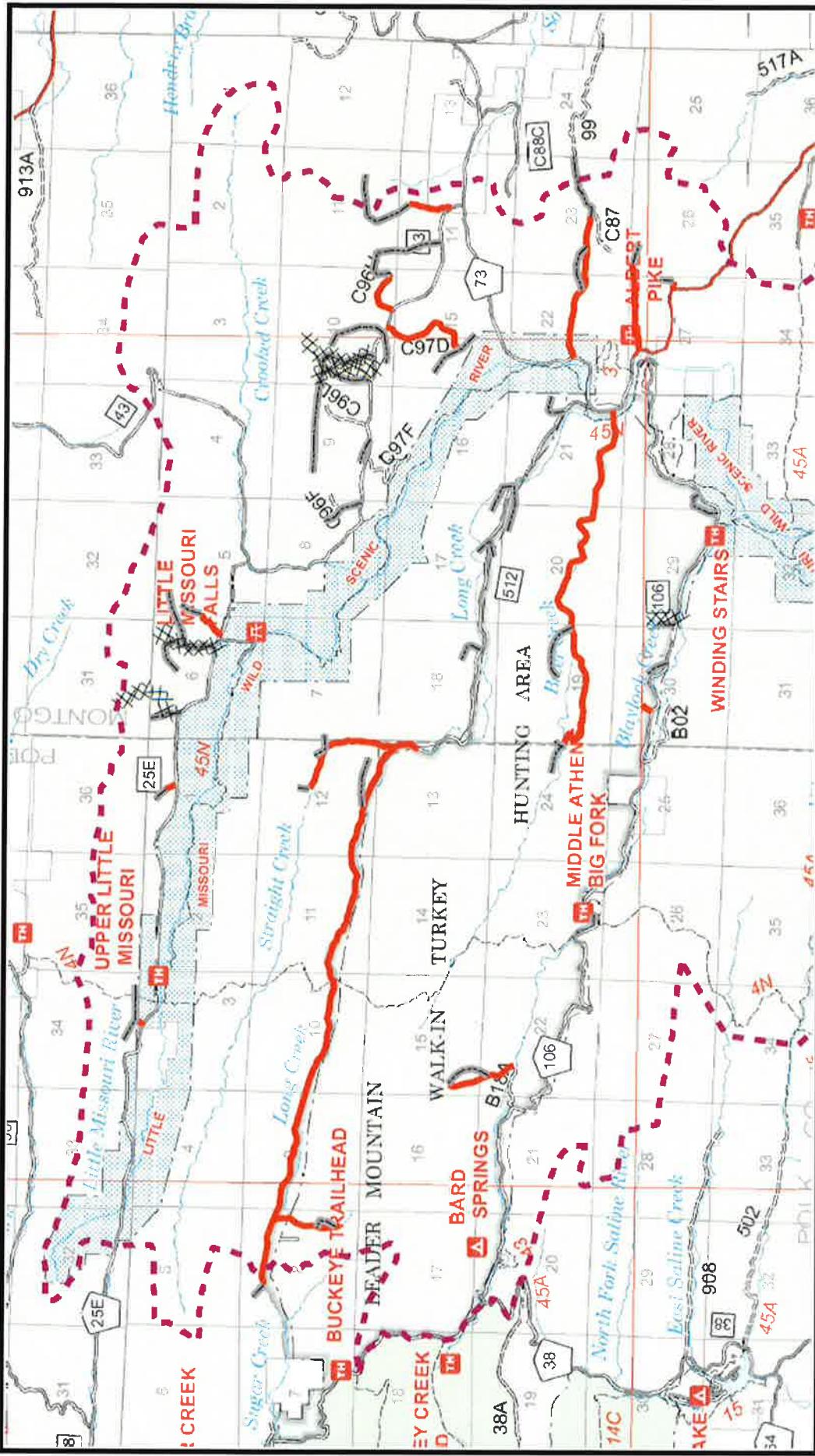
For more information, contact the
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Map Creation Date - 3/3/2020
Map Revision Date -



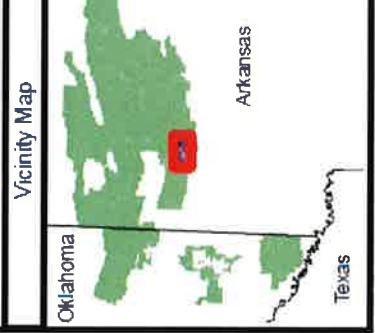
Headwaters Little Missouri Project

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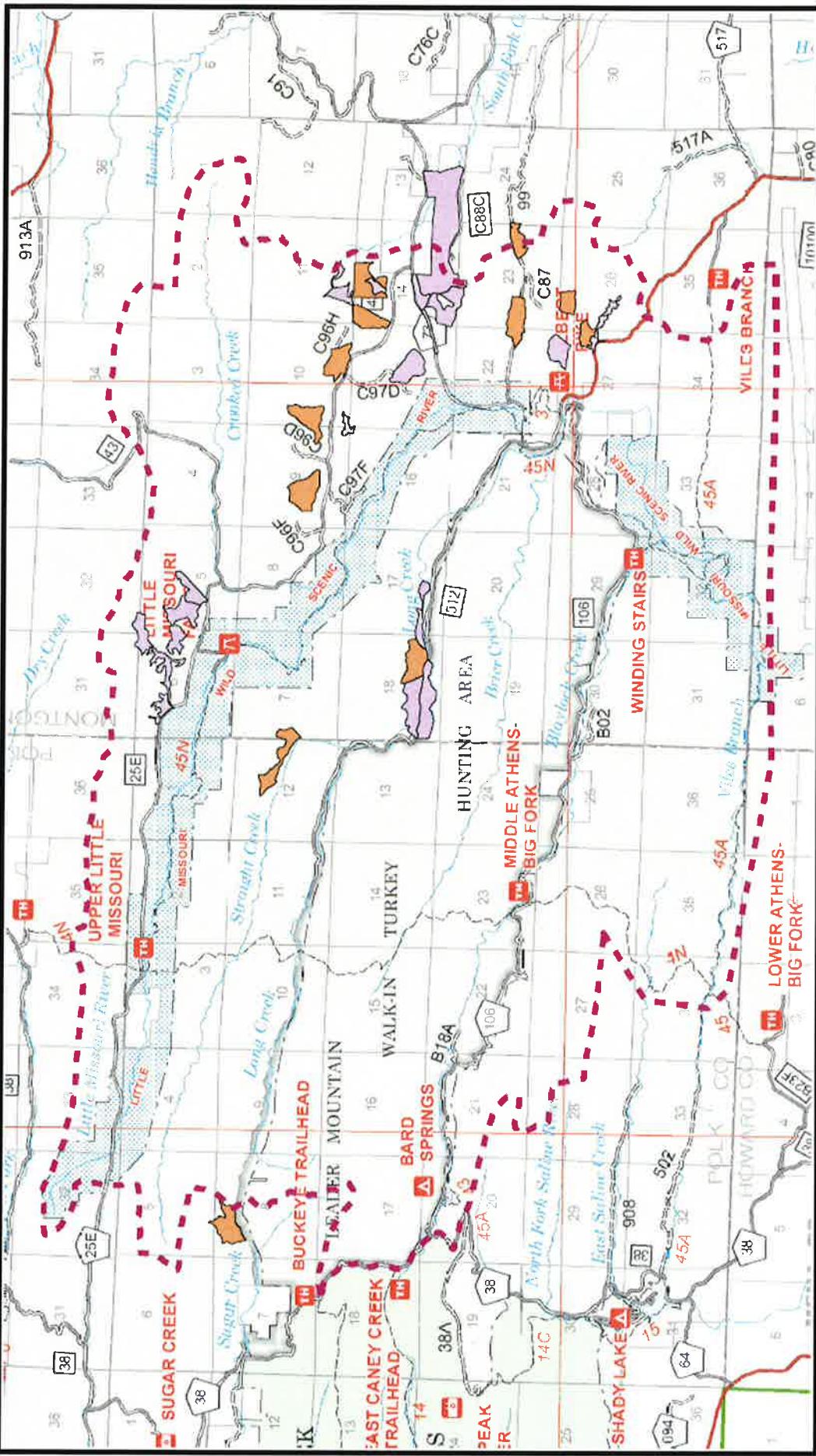
Legend	Roads	Project Boundary
Decom	Headwaters Little Missouri Project	■ Project Boundary
name	Caddo-Womble Ranger District	■ Decom
Reconstruct	U.S. Forest Service - R8	— Reconstruct
temp	Ouachita National Forest	— temp
	For more information, contact the Ranger District at (870) 867-2101, 1523 Hwy 270 E Mt Ida AR 71957	
	Map Creation Date - 3/3/2020 Map Revision Date -	
	0 0.5 1 2 Miles	



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Headwaters Little Missouri Project

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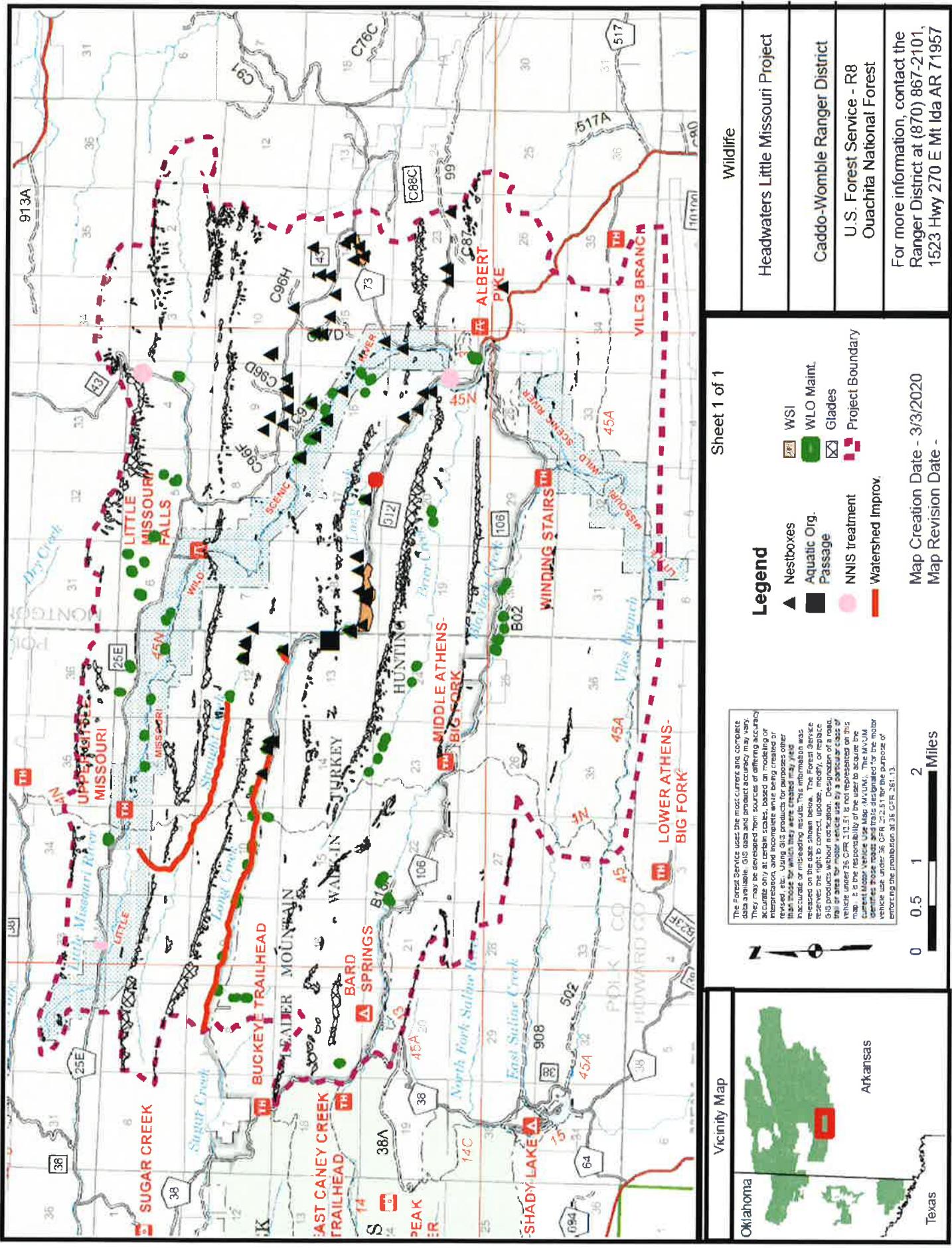
Silviculture	Headwaters Little Missouri Project
	Caddo-Womble Ranger District
	U.S. Forest Service - R8 Ouachita National Forest
	For more information, contact the Ranger District at (870) 867-2101, 1523 Hwy 270 E Mt Ida AR 71957
Legend	
Project Boundary Treatment	
Precommercial thin	
Seed Tree	
connected actions	
Map Creation Date - 3/3/2020	
Map Revision Date -	
Vicinity Map	Arkansas
Oklahoma	Texas

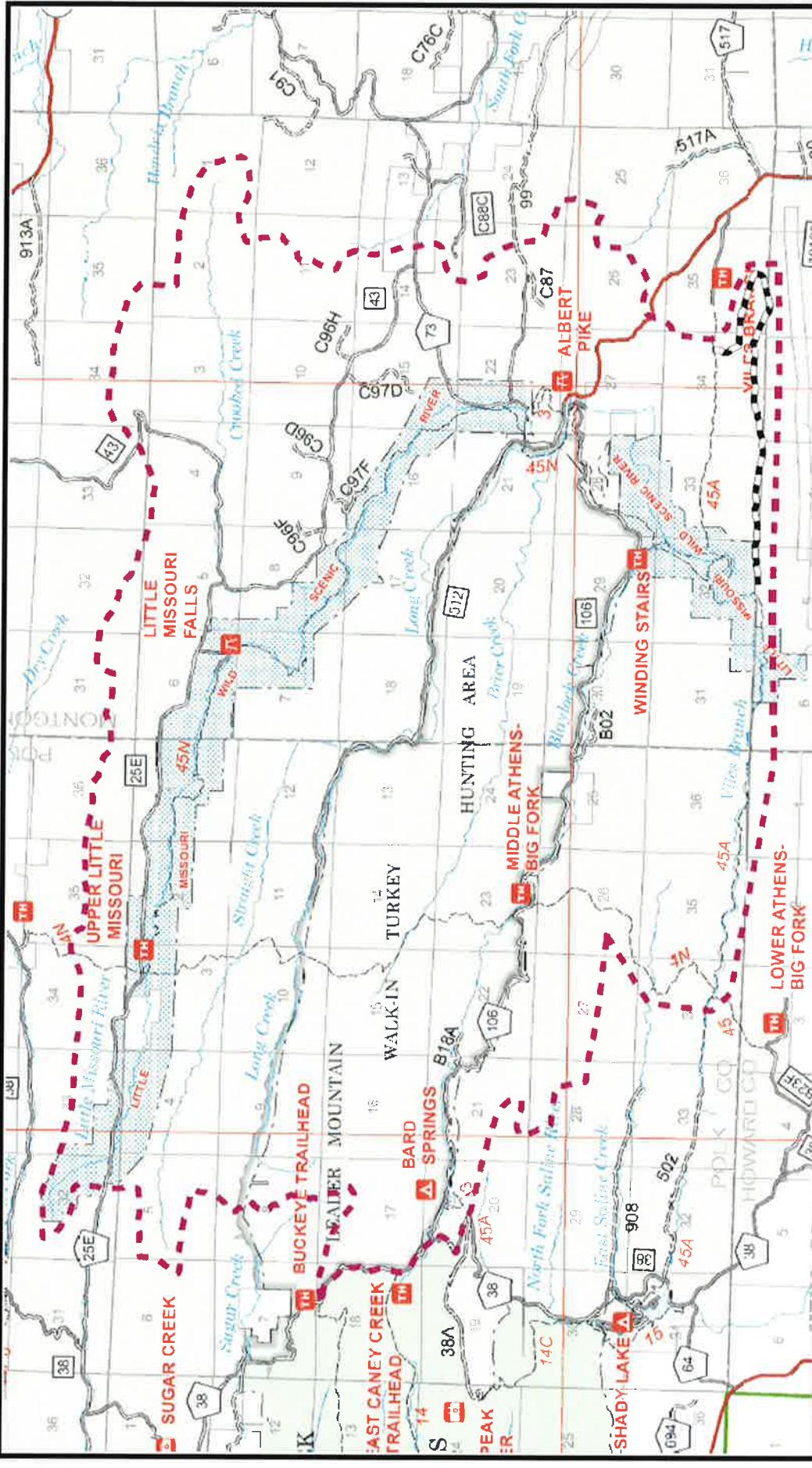
The Forest Service uses the most current and complete data available. GIS data and product accuracies may vary. They may be developed from various sources of different accuracy, security, and timeliness, based on modeling or interpretation. Any commercial entity will be granted or issued a license for which they were created or other than those for which they were created. No restrictions are placed on the use of these data products. The Forest Service makes no representations concerning the suitability of these data products for any specific application. The Forest Service does not warrant data products for specific applications. The Forest Service makes no representations concerning the suitability of these data products for any specific application. The Forest Service does not warrant data products for specific applications.

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Headwaters Little Missouri Project

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Sheet 1 of 1

Recreation

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Vicinity Map



Oklahoma

Arkansas

Headwaters Little Missouri Project

Caddo-Womble Ranger District

U.S. Forest Service - R8

Ouachita National Forest

For more information, contact the

Ranger District at (870) 867-2101,

1523 Hwy 270 E Mt Ida AR 71957

Legend

- Project Boundary
- Trail added to system

Map Creation Date - 3/3/2020

Map Revision Date -